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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

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A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 50 associate NBC radio stations, Tuesday, March 10, 1936.

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Hello folks.. I don't know how the weather/is treating you but here at Washington everything seems to be coming at once and if sunshine, smiling through the clouds, and balmy air continues we will be planting our gardens in a few days. With pruning and spraying and planting all coming at once there is the danger that many things that we have planned to do this spring will go undone. Take that matter of planting a few more trees in the home orchard or setting out a patch of strawberries or a row of raspberries or blackberries. In case the weather turns off warm suddenly buds will swell and growth will start almost before we can get a letter off to some nursery ordering the trees and plants.

There is one question that each and every one of us must settle for ourselves, will it pay to grow our home supply of fruit or will it be cheaper and better to purchase what we want on the market. In years gone by when disease and insect pests were not so numerous and our markets were less abundantly supplied with fresh fruits it certainly did pay to grow our own supply. I have come to the conclusion that it does pay, even under present conditions, to grow your own supply of the small fruits also a pretty full line of the tree fruits for summer and fall use, but to depend upon the markets for the winter supply. Your situation may be different but that seems to be the logical thing to do in my own case. I would not let anything stand in the way of having plenty of fruit for home use and if you are going to do any planting this spring many of you will have to act quickly.

I have found that the best way to grow good fruit for home use is to set aside a special piece of ground, usually about an acre, for the purpose and plant all of the standard fruits such as apples, pears, peaches, cherries and plums, on that piece of ground. If there is any choice in location I would suggest that you select the highest piece of ground you can spare for the home orchard. By having it higher than the surrounding land you will not be so liable to have the blossoms killed by frost because the cold air will drain to the lower levels. The land should be well drained and fairly good soil and above all the soil should not have a hardpan through which the roots of the trees can not reach the moisture supply in the subsoil. Fruit trees are just like any other crop they require good soil and plenty of moisture.

In selecting the kinds of fruit and the varieties to plant always be governed by the experience of your neighbors who have been successful in growing fruit. Remember that certain varieties are what is termed self sterile, that is they will not set fruit with their own pollen and must

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have pollen from some other variety. For example the Grimes Golden apple is very largely used as a pollinator for Staymen and several other varieties of apples. A single sweet cherry tree if planted alone will bear very little if any fruit, but plant three or four varieties of cherries near each other and a good setting of fruit will be secured. Your nurseryman can tell you which varieties are congenial and which are not.

And here is another point, it is not necessary to pay exorbitant prices in order to get good nursery trees that are clean. By being clean I mean trees that have healthy roots and good clean bark. When you get your trees home unpack them immediately and imbed the roots in moist soil until you can plant them.

In planting any tree always dig holes that are somewhat larger than is required for the roots, then spread the roots out in a natural position. Place some good soil in the bottom of the hole under the tree and set the tree so that when it is planted it will stand about the same depth, or perhaps an inch deeper than it grew in the nursery. Be sure that the soil comes in direct contact with the roots and that there is not an air space directly under the center of the tree, don't be afraid to tramp the soil firmly about the roots of the tree. If any of the roots have been broken or lacerated in digging the tree take a sharp knife and trim off the broken portion making a nice clean, sloping cut. After the tree is set give it a good pruning, thinning out and heading back the branches to make a symmetrical head.

This is all rather hard to describe over the radio and perhaps it would be best for you to send to the Department for a copy of Farmers' Bulletin No. 1001 on growing fruit for home use. In this little bulletin you will find a lot of pictures that tell this planting and pruning story better than by mere words. It is Farmers' Bulletin No. 1001. For the small fruits you will want a copy of Farmers' Bulletin No. 1242 on the permanent fruit and vegetable garden. Now tomorrow, and I believe Mr. Salisbury has me scheduled for the Farm and Home Hour tomorrow, I want to give you folks who have fruit trees of bearing age a few pointers about pruning spraying and fertilizing your trees so that you may grow some truly worth-while fruit for your own use. And so until tomorrow at this hour I'll be getting back to my mail basket and your many letters.

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